BATTLE HYMN

OF THE

Virginia Soldier!

FATHER of earth and heaven! I call thy name!
Round me the smoke and shout of battle roll;
My eyes are dazzled with the rustling flame;
Father, sustain an untried soldier's soul.
Or life, or death, whatever be the goal
That crowns or closes round this struggling hour,
Thou knowest, if ever from my spirit stole
One deeper prayer, 'twas that no cloud might lower
On my young fame!—O hear! God of eternal power!

God! thou art merciful. The wintry storm,
The cloud that pours the thunder from its womb,
But show the sterner grandeur of thy form;
The lightnings, glancing through the midnight gloom,
To Faith's raised eye, as calm as lovely come,
As splendors of the autumnal evening star,
As roses shaken by the breeze's plume,
When like cool incense comes the dewy air,
And on the golden wave, the sun-set burns afar.

God! thou are mighty!—At thy footstool bound,
Lie gazing to thee, Chance, and Life, and Death;
Nor in the Angel-circle flaming round,
Nor in the million worlds that blaze beneath,
Is one that can withstand thy wrath's hot breath.
Wo in thy frown—in thy smile victory!
Hear my last prayer,—I ask no mortal wreath;
Let but these eyes my rescued country see,
Then take my spirit, All Omnipotent, to thee.

Now for the fight—now for the cannon-peal—
Forward—through blood, and toil, and cloud, and fire!
Glorious the shout, the shock, the crash of Steel,
The volley's roll, the rocket's blasting spire;
They shake—like broken waves their squares retire,—
On them, Virginians give them rein and heel;
Think of the orphaned child, the murdered sire:—
Earth cries for blood,—in thunder on them wheel!
Drive to the very hilt our Southern steel.